



What works? What fails?

FINDINGS FROM THE NAVRONGO COMMUNITY HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING PROJECT



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Navrongo Health Research Centre

CENTRAL VIEWPOINT

WW: We would like to know if you and your people have benefited in any way from the work of the Navrongo Health Research Centre (NHRC).

Chief Adda: My subjects and I have benefited a lot from the research work of the NHRC. Since its inception over a decade ago, diseases like malaria, CSM, and many others have been brought under control if not completely eradicated. The NHRC has reduced the infant mortality and morbidity rates in the community. The women now deliver safely and their children grow up into healthy adults. I have noticed that the health research workers have been giving drugs and vaccines to pregnant women and children and this makes the children strong, healthy, and even intelligent.

WW: Did anyone from the NHRC come to talk to you about the Community Health and Family Planning Project (CHFP)? If yes, can you describe the first such occasion when someone from the NHRC came to talk to you about the CHFP?

Chief Adda: It is true that any time you want to undertake a new project you come to discuss with me. I always in turn let the information reach out to my people for them to know what you plan on doing. I was probably not available at the time you came to talk about the CHFP in particular. Your activities are so many that I will not even know which research project you're talking about at one particular time. Ever since you started working in my community, none of your workers came to lay a complaint that my people are making their work difficult—neither did any of my people complain that your workers are causing problems in the community. I thus think there has been cooperation and understanding between both sides. In fact the work of NHRC has won the admiration of my people.



Arthur Wekem Balinia Adda—young, dynamic and in control of the Navrongo Traditional Area

WW: I know some of our nurses are not working within the centre of Navrongo town but in the suburbs that fall under your jurisdiction. What is the importance of these nurses placed in the communities?

Chief Adda: It is true that some of your nurses do not operate within the town but even with those in the villages, their work is without blemish. Just recently, I visited Gia and I was pleased with what I saw. A man fell seriously sick and was rushed to the nurse deployed there. But the nurse noticing that she had no logistics to face the situation quickly sped on her motorbike to town and brought a car to carry the man to the district hospital for treatment. This is something worthy of praise and emulation by others. The nearness of the nurse to the people is crucial.

WW: Do health volunteers have any role in facilitating the work of the nurse in the community?

Chief Adda: As you said earlier, these volunteers are not present in the town so I do not know specifically what they do. But talking about those people in the far off-villages, I think the NHRC alongside other authorities should strive to place vehicles in these villages so that emergency cases can be rushed to the big hospital for treatment.

WW: Are there some diseases in the community that we are suppose to research into which we haven't done or which we are not aware of?

Chief Adda: I will say NHRC has dealt with almost all the diseases I can think of. The few I think are polio and convulsion which use to strike our children but they have also been captured under your scope.

WW: The NHRC involves all people in its work and so we consulted our ancestors through a diviner on the issue of family planning and they condoned the idea. As the chief, what comments will you make on the stands taken by our ancestors?

Chief Adda: We have noticed that those who accept and practise family planning are those who have realized the difficulties involved in catering for many mouths. Today, farming is not as rewarding as in the days of our ancestors. It is woeful that some people are still living on the dark side of family planning. They believe that God has given each person a number of children to deliver and so if you don't deliver the whole number given you and He comes to pick His share from the few, you will be losing. Meanwhile, others say God has asked them to multiply and fill the world so there is no need for planning family sizes. Being too gullible to these beliefs, people tend to forget the hardships that abound in today's world like cost of feeding, education, and the costs involved in getting medical attention. It's our duty to educate our colleagues to practise family planning so that they too can enjoy its benefits.

WW: Government has seen that the steps taken by NHRC are the most ultimate means of providing health services to the rural folk and is thus replicating its work in other districts. NHRC achieved this merit through you and your communities. How do you feel hearing this news?

Chief Adda: This is something that brings happiness to the people of the KND and the NHRC because it has been able to transform change to others. It is good that other districts take up similar projects so that at the end we will have a healthy Ghana and work to move the country forward.

At the durbar grounds—even in the centre of things others often take the back seat



WW: Is there anything you would like to say regarding the work of NHRC that I have not asked you?

Chief Adda: The relationship between my palace and NHRC is brotherly. If there is something that bothers us we can easily contact each other. I can remember sometime when NHRC visited Manyoro to start its work and mistakenly started dealing with someone who claimed to be the chief there but he was not the recognised chief. When I heard it, I quickly drew the attention of the Director and pointed out the dangers inherent in dealing with someone in the community in a capacity that he was not traditionally qualified to assume. The

issue was speedily sorted out and since then I have not heard anything similar to it. Generally speaking the Navropio's Palace is satisfied with your work and my elders and subjects cherish your work very much. We hope things will continue and even improve.

Send questions or comments to: What works? What fails?

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